

HOMELESS AND OTHER SPECIAL POPULATIONS

OBJECTIVE #1:

Prevention:

To strengthen and enhance prevention-related programs and services, so as to minimize the number of Cambridge individuals and families who become homeless.

Over the coming year, the City of Cambridge through its Multi-Service Center anticipates placing a mix of homeless and at-risk individual and family households in temporary and permanent housing. In addition, the City expects to provide prevention-related assistance that will enable 180 individuals and 300 families at risk of homelessness to remain in their existing housing.

Expected Resources

- ***Federal Funds***
 - Community Development Block Grant Program
 - FEMA Funds
 - Section 8 Certificates and Vouchers
- ***State Funds***
 - State Payments for Legal Assistance
- ***Local Funds***
 - City of Cambridge Tax Dollars
 - Cambridge Housing Assistance Fund (private donors)
 - Cambridge Fund for Housing (private donors)
 - Families to Families Fund (private donors)

Strategies

Homelessness/Eviction Prevention: Continue and expand prevention services (e.g., prevention-focused case management; free legal assistance, advocacy, and mediation support to prevent eviction; and targeted financial assistance to address arrearages and prevent eviction or to support transition to alternate, more affordable housing). The City of Cambridge contributes some \$190,000/year in municipal tax dollars towards homelessness prevention, including over \$150,000 for staff who provide emergency case management for at-risk individuals and families and a pro-rated (50%) share of the \$80,000 cost for rent/utilities to operate the Multi-Service Center. In addition, approximately half of a \$170,000 contract with the State Department of Transitional Assistance and \$22,000 in CDBG funding for the City's Housing Assistance Program fund landlord/tenant counseling/mediation and housing search services to prevent family homelessness. (The other 50% of the DTA and CDBG-funded program pays for housing search services for

already homeless families.) Approximately half of the staff time funded by another \$40,000 in CDBG money pays for housing search, and related services for at-risk elders and/or persons with disabilities. A \$20,000 CDBG grant plus \$50,000 in municipal grant funding supplement private and State IOLTA funding for legal services to prevent eviction. A significant portion of the \$100,000-plus in privately raised funds (Cambridge Housing Assistance Fund, Cambridge Fund for Housing the Homeless, Bridge Fund, Family to Family Fund) is annually used to cover emergency payments to landlords to prevent homelessness, supplementing the thousands of dollars in FEMA funds used to prevent eviction and/or loss of heat/utilities for Cambridge households

Discharge Planning: Support advocacy efforts to promote more effective discharge planning by State-administered and/or State-funded mental health, corrections, and protective services agencies

Employment Assistance: Maintain and enhance access to employment services (e.g., free assistance at the Cambridge Employment Program and the National Student Partnership office housed at the Multi-Service Center), to prevent the impoverishment that leads to homelessness. Most notably, the Cambridge Employment Program is funded by a combination of \$80,000 in municipal funding and some \$50,000 in "Moving to Work" federal funding through the Cambridge Housing Authority to provide employment assistance to low-income persons. In addition, a portion of WIA funding administered by Employment Resources Inc. through its contract with the local Career Center pays for employment services offered to at-risk persons.

Housing Assistance: Continue and expand efforts to increase the supply of affordable housing in Cambridge (see other sections of this Plan), sustain efforts to prevent the loss of affordable housing due to "expiring use" provisions, and maximize utilization of Section 8 subsidies to enable tenants to remain in existing housing. Most notably, the Cambridge Housing Authority has permission from HUD (i) to raise the Section 8 rent ceiling to 120% of the FMR, and (ii) to issue Section 8 vouchers, rather than certificates, which, in the face of rapidly rising rental rates, makes it more possible for subsidy holders to obtain and retain housing in Cambridge, by allowing them to supplement the CHA rent payment (limited by the 120% FMR rent ceiling) by paying up to 40% of their income toward the unsubsidized portion of the rent. Unfortunately, the supply of Section 8 subsidies has been frozen by the Congress and HUD for the foreseeable future.

OBJECTIVE #2:

Access:

To maintain and expand access by homeless persons to programs and services which can meet their basic human needs, so that to the extent that they are willing to accept such assistance, every homeless individual and family has, at a minimum, a safe place to sleep, food, clothing, and necessary health care.

On the night of the most recent (January 15-16, 2004) point-in-time program census, the City of Cambridge provided shelter or transitional housing to 50 homeless families and 351 homeless individuals. The count took place during the middle of one of the coldest stretches of the winter, during which time a temporary shelter was opened in the basement of the Old Cambridge Baptist Church, which typically houses only daytime programming. There was no simultaneous count of unsheltered homeless persons that night (such a count is scheduled for the overnight between March 29-30, 2004); however, the number of persons counted was more or less comparable to the number of persons counted during a combined program and street census conducted in November 2002. The presumption is that during this period of extreme cold, the temporary shelter at OCBC and the overflow cots at several of the other Cambridge-based shelters were utilized by a majority of the men and women who otherwise “sleep out.” The November 2002 street census of homeless persons had counted some 60-plus homeless persons in the streets, parks, cars, and subway stations in Cambridge. Most of these unsheltered persons utilize congregate meal or drop-in programs, where they can obtain clothing, showers, and health care; others avoid organized programs on all but the harshest winter days.

At this time, the City is unable to accurately assess the number of unduplicated homeless persons served over the course of a year; however, with the ongoing implementation of MIS software at local homeless-serving programs, the City hopes to have the ability by 2005 to provide such data.

Expected Resources

- **Federal Funds**

- Community Development Block Grant Program
- Emergency Shelter Grant Program
- McKinney-Vento Supported Housing Program for various services
- Federal Funding for Health Care for the Homeless services
- Federal PACE funding for mental health services for the homeless
- Federal Mental Health and Substance Abuse Block Grant

- **State Funds**

- State (and federally matched) Emergency Assistance payments for shelter services
- State (and federally matched) Medicaid Services
- State (and federally matched) payments for battered women’s shelter services
- State payments for residential substance abuse treatment services and shelter

- **Local Funds**

City of Cambridge Tax Dollars

Cambridge Health Alliance funding for family shelter-based health care case management and shelter services for substance abusing homeless persons

Foundation, corporate, and donor grants and contributions

Strategies

Shelter Services: A network of five shelters for individual adults (four “dry” shelters and one “wet” shelter for active substance abusers), two family shelters, and one shelter for battered women provide emergency shelter for homeless persons (funded by a combination of approximately \$3 million of State and federally matched resources, as listed above, as well as tens of thousands of privately raised dollars). (In previous years, this report also counted the St. Patrick’s Shelter, operated by Catholic charities as being a “Cambridge” program. Although the shelter is physically located in Somerville, the women are picked up at the Cambridge Multi-Service Center and transported by van to the shelter. Beginning this year, as Cambridge and Somerville seek to contribute to a national effort to obtain, more accurate unduplicated counts of homeless persons, each City will only be counting programs that are physically located within their respective jurisdictions.) ESG grants provided \$45,000 in support of shelter operations and/or renovations.

Food and Meal Programs: A network of ten food pantries (funded with FEMA grants; foundation, corporate, and private grants and donations; and an annual \$96,000 City grant) distribute emergency food in Cambridge; three of these pantries serve significant numbers of homeless persons. Eight Churches or Church-sponsored organizations, one non-profit, and the City’s Council on Aging sponsor a range of lunch and supper programs 365 days a year, serving a mix of homeless and low income persons. All homeless families and some homeless individuals access federal Food Stamps and eligible homeless families access WIC coupons. Homeless individuals are assisted by case management staff in obtaining Food Stamps based on income eligibility. All shelters for individuals provide dinner and breakfast for guests funded by a combination of FEMA grants and foundation, corporate, and private donations and grants. All family shelters provide cooking facilities for guests. \$41,500 in CDBG funding helps support an emergency food recovery and distribution program which supplies food to nearly all of the aforementioned pantry, shelter, and meal programs.

Clothing Services: All shelters for individuals receive and distribute clothing for guests. These efforts are supplemented by clothing distribution programs serving guests at five drop-in programs, and a retail second hand clothing store operated as a transitional employment program for homeless persons by CASPAR in neighboring Somerville. A network of other charitable programs collect and distribute donated clothing for both homeless and low income persons.

Health Care and Related Services: Local hospitals and the network of neighborhood health centers affiliated with the Cambridge Hospital (the Cambridge Health Alliance) all accept and enroll patients in the Medicaid (locally known as Mass Health) and Free Care

programs. (All homeless families whose shelter services are funded under the Emergency Assistance portion of TANF are automatically eligible for and enrolled in Medicaid; homeless individuals must qualify on the basis of income and age/disability.) In addition, health care is available at shelter-based clinics operated by the federally funded (\$50,000-plus) Health Care for the Homeless program, and for youth and young adults by a mobile van-based health care program sponsored by Bridge Over Troubled Waters and funded by various charitable concerns.

A McKinney Vento grant (approximately \$14,000/year plus a \$14,000/year local match by the Cambridge Health Alliance) helps fund family shelter-based health care case management services for an average of 30 families. The federal Mental Health and Substance Abuse Block Grant helps fund non-Medicaid-reimbursable detoxification and community-based emergency mental health services (both of which serve a primarily homeless clientele), and a portion of the stabilization services which match one of the federal Shelter Plus Care grants. State Public Health and Medicaid programs fund residential and outpatient substance abuse treatment programs, whose clienteles consist largely of homeless persons. (A detoxification program that largely served homeless persons was forced to close in 2003 due to State budget cuts.)

A \$131,000/year McKinney-Vento grant matched by \$50,000-plus in municipal funding, supports CASPAR's street outreach program serving 200-plus unsheltered substance abusers; a \$49,000/year McKinney-Vento grant matched by more than \$12,000 in other funding adds a TriCity Mental Health clinician to the aforementioned street outreach team. A \$19,000/year McKinney-Vento grant matched by cash contributions in excess of \$16,000/year funds a North Charles relapse prevention program serving 20-plus transitionally housed men at any point in time. Approximately \$90,000 in federal PACE grants fund shelter-based mental health services operated by TriCity Mental Health..

Low Threshold Drop-In Programs: A network of ten programs offer a site-specific mix of daytime drop-in programming for homeless and/or at-risk persons, drawing funding support from a mix of government and private sources. A \$27,500 ESG grant helps fund a Shelter Inc. drop-in for homeless women. A \$50,000/year McKinney Vento grant, a \$13,000 ESG grant, and tens of thousands of dollars in other matching funds helps support Bread & Jams' drop-in program serving some 60-plus unsheltered and under-served homeless adults each day. A \$35,000/year McKinney Vento grant, a \$7,500 ESG grant, and tens of thousands of dollars in other matching funds helps support Cambridge Cares About AIDS' street outreach and drop-in program for homeless and runaway youth and young adults. While CASPAR's wet shelter is closed during the day, the facility houses a low threshold drop-in/treatment program for medically at-risk chronic substance abusers, thanks to tens of thousands of dollars in support contributed by the City and the Cambridge Health Alliance. On the Rise's street outreach and drop-in program, serving an average caseload of 16-plus unsheltered and under-served homeless women, no longer receives McKinney Vento grant funding, having determined that the collection of data required for compliance with HUD's and Congress's HMIS mandate, even on a voluntary basis, would have posed a potential barrier to access to the disengaged homeless women targeted by the program. Private funding also enables the Salvation Army to operate its drop-in programming.

CASPAR's Phoenix Center in neighboring Somerville offers drop-in support and access to daily meetings for substance abusers. Two "social clubs" funded with a combination of State Department of Mental Health grants and private funding provide drop-in support to persons with histories of mental illness. A Women's Center, with \$10,000 in CDBG support, provides drop-in services for women.

OBJECTIVE #3:

Housing:

To maximize the number of homeless individuals/families who, with the help of resources available through the Cambridge Continuum of Care, are able to obtain housing and develop the necessary skills, resources, and self-confidence to sustain that housing and maximize their self-determination.

As noted above, on the night of the most recent (January 15-16, 2004) point-in-time program census, the City of Cambridge provided shelter or transitional housing to 50 homeless families and 351 homeless individuals. The count took place during the middle of one of the coldest stretches of the winter, during which time a temporary shelter was opened in the basement of the Old Cambridge Baptist Church, which typically houses only daytime programming. There was no simultaneous count of unsheltered homeless persons that night (such a count is scheduled for the overnight between March 29-30, 2004); however, the number of persons counted was more or less comparable to the number of persons counted during a combined program and street census conducted in November 2002. The presumption is that during this period of extreme cold, the temporary shelter at OCBC and the overflow cots at several of the other Cambridge-based shelters were utilized by a majority of the men and women who otherwise “sleep out.” The November 2002 street census of homeless persons had counted some 60-plus homeless persons in the streets, parks, cars, and subway stations in Cambridge. Most of these unsheltered persons utilize congregate meal or drop-in programs, where they can obtain clothing, showers, and health care; others avoid organized programs on all but the harshest winter days.

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Expected Resources

- **Federal Funds**

Community Development Block Grant Program
HOME Program
Low Income Housing Tax Credits
Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program
Section 8 Certificates and Vouchers
Section 811 Grants to Develop Housing for persons with mental illness
Emergency Shelter Grant Program
McKinney-Vento Shelter Plus Care
McKinney-Vento Supported Housing Program for various services
Family and Youth Services Bureau funding for street outreach to youth and young adults

- **State Funds**

Housing Innovations Fund (HIF) and Housing Stabilization Fund (HSF)

- **Local Funds**

City of Cambridge Tax Dollars
Foundation, corporate, and donor grants and contributions
Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust Fund (funded by a combination of tax dollars, “Inclusionary Zoning” payments by housing developers, and “Linkage” fees contributed by commercial property developers)

Strategies

Permanent Supportive Housing: A \$20,000 ESG grant, in combination with other privately raised funds, pays for case management services for participants in a 9-person Shelter Plus Care program. Shelter Plus Care subsidies for a total of 16 units of housing serving diverse populations (individuals and families with disabilities, including persons with mental illness, substance abuse, HIV/AIDS) leverage hundreds of thousands of dollars in supportive services.

In addition to the aforementioned S+C units, the Mass. Department of Mental Health funds supportive services for 163 units of permanent supportive housing for persons with mental illness (125 of which were occupied by formerly homeless persons). A McKinney-Vento SHP grant (\$9,000/year) funds supportive services for eight units of permanent supportive housing in public housing. Recent McKinney-Vento grants have helped CASCAP renovate three (3) units of permanent supportive housing (PSH) for formerly homeless persons with mental illness (\$250,000), and helped the Essex Street Development Corp purchase five (5) units of permanent supportive housing (\$250,000) for formerly homeless persons with mental illness (who will be serviced by CASCAP); helped Shelter Inc. develop nine (9) units of PSH for persons with disabilities ending their homelessness (\$400,000 for acquisition plus \$100,000 for three years of services); and helped Transition House lease and service six (6) units of PSH for battered and

disabled families (4) and single women (2) moving beyond homelessness and domestic violence.

The three grants that funded acquisition, construction and/or rehab of the PSH leveraged well over \$900,000 in federal and State-derived HOME funds, Section 811 funding, and City tax dollars, in accordance with HUD's requirement for a dollar for dollar match. Another \$172,000 in McKinney-Vento funding for three years of supportive services to be provided to residents in these new units will be matched by \$43,000 from a range of private funding sources.

This past year's SuperNOFA application yielded conditional award of \$1.4 million in funding for three new PSH initiatives including: (1) leasing and supportive services for 24 homeless individuals with disabilities in scattered site units, (2) supported services for eight (8) homeless elders and older adults with disabilities in public housing units, and (3) leasing and supportive services for 24 homeless individuals with disabilities in scattered site units.

Permanent Housing: please see other sections of the Consolidated Plan

Transitional Housing: Homeless persons are served in Cambridge by 13 transitional housing programs. The CDBG program helps fund staffing for a five unit women's transitional housing program at the YWCA (\$11,000, supplemented by private funding and a \$42,000 grant from MHSA for staffing and rooms) and for a transitional program for men and women at CASPAR's Emergency Service Center (\$20,000). A 22-unit men's transitional housing program at the YMCA (operated by the City's Multi-Service Center) is funded by a \$78,000 grant from MHSA for staff plus tens of thousands of dollars of grant funding to cover rent for the 22 rooms. A summer program for twelve men and women operated by students from Harvard University is funded by the Phillips Brooks House program at Harvard.

Seven transitional housing programs are all funded, in part by McKinney-Vento SHP grants, as follows: a CASPAR program for five men in recovery (\$44,000/year plus matching money for operations and supportive services), a CASPAR program for seven women in recovery (\$57,000/year plus matching money for operations and supportive services), a Cambridge Cares About AIDS (CCAA) program for five men with HIV/AIDS (\$27,000/year for leasing plus leveraged money for staffing), a CCAA program for five women with HIV/AIDS (\$31,000/year for leasing plus leveraged money for staffing), a Shelter Inc. program for five women (\$81,000/year plus matching money for supportive services and operations), a Shelter Inc. program for five families (\$52,000/year plus matching money for supportive services plus five leveraged Section 8 certificates worth approximately \$50,000/year), and a Transition House Transitional Living Program for five families and four women (\$55,000/year SHP grant, plus matching money for supportive services, plus leveraged rental assistance subsidies). The Salvation Army draws upon private funding to operate an in-house transitional housing program for shelter residents who have demonstrated commitment to ending their homelessness, and CASPAR uses Substance Abuse Block Grant funds and other

resources to operate two recovery-oriented transitional housing programs for newly sober men and women.

Case Management and Other Supportive Services: In addition to other supportive services mentioned in the previous section (e.g., street outreach, health-related programming, and drop-in programming), the Cambridge Continuum includes a variety of McKinney-Vento-funded supportive services programs to assist homeless persons address their income, employment, money-management, legal, housing, and other related needs. In each case, HUD SHP funding is matched on a 1:4 basis (at least one dollar of match for every four dollars of federal funding) by locally fundraised money. Specifically, the Continuum includes

- \$185,000/year in SHP funds (matched in part by approximately \$20,000/year in CDBG funding, plus other privately raised monies) for two HomeStart housing search programs serving approximately 100 persons; a combination of State and privately-fundraised pools of money (Cambridge Housing Assistance Fund, Cambridge Fund for Housing the Homeless, etc.) help homeless individuals cover the up-front cost of obtaining rental housing;
- \$51,000/year in SHP funds for HomeStart's field based case management program, serving an average caseload of over 50 persons;
- \$32,000/year in SHP funds for CASCAP's fiduciary (money management / representative payee) program, intensively serving 40 persons at any point in time;
- \$60,000/year in SHP funds for Shelter Inc.'s specialized legal assistance program, serving an average caseload of 30 persons;
- \$33,000/year in SHP funds for the Community Learning Center's literacy and computer literacy program, serving 18 homeless students at any point in time;
- \$16,000/year in SHP funds for Shelter Inc's voicemail services, distributing 400 voice mailboxes to homeless persons each year;
- \$35,000/year in SHP funds for the Hildebrand's stabilization program providing support to families transitioning from homelessness to housing.

As noted, the City's Housing Assistance Program, funded by a \$165,000/year State Department of Transitional Assistance contract and \$25,000 in municipal tax dollars, pays for housing search and related services for homeless families staying in DTA shelters. Approximately half of the staff time funded by another \$40,000 in CDBG money pays for housing search, and related services for homeless elders and/or persons with disabilities. Another \$113,000 in municipal funding pays for case management for homeless and at-risk individuals and families. Another \$90,000 of City tax dollars funds administrative staffing (program management, reception) and occupancy costs associated with the provision of services to homeless persons at the Multi-Service Center (i.e., 50% of the \$180,000 allocated to administrative and occupancy costs, based on the approximate 50/50 split of services between prevention and homelessness response). Approximately 15% of the caseload of the locally funded (\$132,000) Cambridge Employment Program is homeless.

SPECIAL POPULATIONS

The City supports nonprofit and public agencies in their applications for federal and state funds to develop additional housing with appropriate services for low-income persons with special needs. This includes nonprofit applications for commitments from federal programs like Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities. Cambridge will also consider providing low interest loans and construction loans to fund gaps in the capital costs of developing supportive housing.

Supportive Housing Development Program

In FY2004, in addition to strongly supporting nonprofit agencies in their applications for federal and state funds to develop additional housing with appropriate services for low-income persons with special needs, Cambridge will target low-interest loans and construction loans to fund gaps in the capital costs of developing supportive housing.

Support for other entities

Cambridge will support other entities in their applications for resources consistent with this goal. For development projects, Cambridge will offer this support after evaluating these entities, with respect to the capacity of the development and management teams, and the financial feasibility of specific projects. The City will offer technical assistance to nonprofit developers in order to help build this capacity.

Leveraging plans and matching requirements

Cambridge intends to continue its work to leverage state, local and private funds to support activities in this area. Funds leveraged tend to be committed on a site-by-site basis, but generally include the Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust, funds provided by Cambridge Banks Housing Associates (a consortium of local banks), local lenders and other sources. Some of these funds have matching requirements. For example, the Shelter Plus Care Program requires that federal rental subsidies be matched dollar-for-dollar with state and local service commitments.

Service Delivery and Management

The Cambridge Community Development Department will coordinate service delivery and management associated with this priority area. Cambridge will continue to work with its existing network of nonprofit agencies, and encourage new sponsors, to produce housing for the homeless, in partnership with the Cambridge Housing Authority and the State and Federal Government.